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NEW YORK TIMES
3 April, 1985

Plea Bargain Talks Reported in Spy Trial on Coast

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Special to The New York Times

LOS ANGELES, April 2 — Negotiations are being held toward a possible plea bargain agreement for a Russian immigrant couple accused of spying for the Soviet Government, sources close to the case said today.

On Monday Judge David V. Kenyon Jr. ordered a one-week postponement of the opening arguments in the trial of the couple, Svetlana and Nikolay Ogorodnikov, in Federal District Court. An agent for the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Richard W. Miller, faces a separate trial on charges of bribery and conspiracy to commit espionage. The date of that trial has not been set.

The postponement of opening arguments until April 10 was announced as closed hearings continued in the judge's chambers to determine whether classified material should be presented as evidence for the defense. No reason was given for the delay.

Sources close to the case said that plea bargaining talks, which could avert a trial, were being held by Government prosecutors and defense attorneys. It was not clear what the pivotal point of the talks was. Last month Judge Kenyon imposed an order barring attorneys from publicly discussing evidence in the case.

Judge Kenyon began the hearing in

his chambers this week under the provisions of the Federal Classified Information Procedures Act, which deals with what classified information can be disclosed in public at a trial. If a particular classified document or other material is ruled admissible as evidence, on grounds that it is both relevant and necessary to a fair defense, the law provides for the trial judge to determine whether a substitute form of the material would be adequate to protect the defendant's rights.

Congress passed the act as a protection against the possibility that defendants in sensitive cases might threaten to disclose United States secrets if they were put on trial.

Mrs. Ogorodnikov's relationship with

the F.B.I. office in Los Angeles is a key issue in the classified-material discussions, knowledgeable sources said. The 34-year-old defendant contends that she was an informer for the F.B.I. in the Russian émigré community in Los Angeles. Defense attorneys say she was acting in that capacity when she was arrested on charges of conspiring to pass secret documents to Mr. Miller, who was then an agent in the counterintelligence unit of the bureau's Los Angeles office.

Mrs. Ogorodnikov's attorneys, Gregory P. Stone and Brad D. Brian, have asked that her F.B.I. file be admitted as evidence to show that she was working with the bureau.